

## **THE SERMONS, LECTURES AND SONGS OF SIDNEY EDWARD COX**

**Editorial Note: This is one lesson of a 6-lesson weekly series of Bible studies that Sidney Cox delivered to the congregation of the Eastlake Alliance Church in Birmingham, Alabama in 1973.**



**This is a 2011 picture of what was the Eastlake Alliance Church in 1972. It is located at the intersection of 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North and 85<sup>th</sup> Street in Birmingham and is the current home of the 46<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church.**

**In 1972, at age 84, Sidney Cox had moved from Detroit, Michigan to Birmingham, Alabama to be near my parents, John and Jean Cox. Still remarkably healthy and independent, he lived in a small efficiency apartment on Birmingham's south side. His beloved wife, Violet had earlier passed away in 1967 while they were residing in Detroit.**

**From the time of their commissioning in Toronto, Canada in 1910/1912 to 1944, Sidney and Violet Cox had a well-chronicled career as Salvation Army officers – a journey that took them across the breadth of Canada and ultimately to Atlanta, Georgia in 1928 to be part of the founding of The Salvation Army's Southern Territory.**

**However, during the latter part of his life, Sidney Cox had developed a close relationship with the Christian and Missionary Alliance ("CMA"). CMA operates as a vast network of churches, similar to a "denomination." During the late 1950s and early 1960s, Sidney had served as Professor of New Testament at two Bible institutes – The Miami Bible Institute and The Toccoa Falls Bible Institute (Toccoa, Georgia). These two institutes were principally supported by CMA and graduates often entered pastorates at CMA churches.**

**During this era of his life, Sidney Cox remained in great demand as a preacher, evangelist and Bible teacher both in Salvation Army and CMA venues. The Eastlake Alliance Church was a CMA church and they took advantage of his residency in Birmingham by engaging him to teach this series. The pastor of the church was Glen Tingley, Jr.**

**John Douglas Cox, grandson of Sidney Cox. December 29, 2008.**

**Epistle of Peter  
Part 6  
“The Other Side of the Door” – Babes in Christ  
Chapter 2, Verses 1 & 2  
July 22, 1973**

*Sunday School at Eastlake Alliance Church, Birmingham, Alabama. Lesson number 072273.*

*This is Glen Tingley, Jr. welcoming you to this Sunday School class. Our teacher, Dr. Sidney Cox, is continuing a study in 1<sup>st</sup> Peter.*

*The chalkboard contains the following information:*

*“1<sup>st</sup> Peter Chapter 1”*

- 1. Through the door - Chapter 1, Verses 18-24.*
- 2. Close the door - Chapter 2, Verses 1-3.*

*There is also a drawing of a doorway. The doorpost on the left is labeled “Redemption - Chapter 1, Verse 18.” The doorpost on the right is labeled “Regeneration - Chapter 1, Verse 23.” And across the top of the doorway “Grace - Chapter 1, Verse 23”.*

*And now with the lesson, here is Dr. Cox.*

1st Peter, 1<sup>st</sup> chapter. Now in our lesson today, we are approaching the end of the chapter and I want us to look at the first two verses of the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter, because they all form a part of 1 thing and I want us to read together the closing verses of Chapter 1 and then be aware of what we see in the opening verses of Chapter 2, because they are two parts of the same thing.

Now, there is one thing I didn't put on the board. You can see that there is a diagram of kinds on the board and two main statements: one is, “Through the door,” and the other is, “Close the door.” Now, we're facing a door at the end of Chapter 1 and at the beginning of Chapter 2 and we have a double responsibility or a double privilege. One is to go through it and then when you go through, you close the door behind you.

Now, in that simple statement I have expressed as you know the secret of living the Christian life - is to go completely through the door, and then when you go through you close the door behind you. Now there is no other way of living the Christian life. If you don't understand the door through which we go, and when we go through supposedly leave it ajar on the other side we're in trouble; and as you look around and see the unsatisfactory Christian lives that you can observe if you care to do so wherever you look, it is nearly always because there was something indistinct

and lack of understanding as to what that door is through which we go and then the failure to close it on the other side. Now my dear, let's remember that old Peter knew about that and in his letter that we're studying, he tells us about it.

Now let's remember the path over which we have traveled. Let's just review it. One, he introduces himself and gives his authority and we get a glimpse of the kind of people to whom he is writing. Now that's the opening thing. Then he begins to tell them of the majestic, almost unbelievable things that God in His grace has done for us, and he says, "We are elect according to the foreknowledge of God through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ," and we have been taught how to address our Father, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," and we know what He has done for us, He has set us aside as a special gift of His Son and at the end of it has given us, "An inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away."<sup>1</sup>

Now my dear, that's a brief review. That's just the skeleton of what Peter is saying, "God has done this for us and the more you think about it the more wonderful it becomes," because, my dear, you can see what He is doing. He's going to use folks not only to know what they are but to live accordingly; and the living of the Christian life adequately depends upon an understanding of what we are. If we're adequate children of God and understand that, then our behavior as children of God will automatically follow.

Let me give you an illustration. I am an American citizen and I go to what we call a foreign country. When I go, how do I behave as an American citizen? Well, you know quite well that how I behave in a foreign land depends upon what I think an American citizen is. If an American citizen is something, I behave accordingly. If an American citizen is a hazy mixture of something that doesn't matter much, my behavior will be in accordance with it; and one of the things that old Peter is trying to do and Paul labored with it, is to tell us what a magnificent unbelievable thing God has done in making us what we are. What we are is more important than what we do because it determines that. Now that takes us back to the beginning of our class periods, doesn't it? Because one of the things we did months ago, if we've forgotten; at least we don't do it any more, is to make some common place affirmation that affects our Christian life; and one of the things we said is, "What we are is more important than what we do," because what we do depends on what we are; and so Peter is laboring there, using words that are majestic and you can see if I can use a term like this, the Holy Spirit himself laboring behind him to make it sure and saying to Peter and through Peter, "Tell these folks what they are, what God has done for them. Give them the dimensions of the majestic thing that God in His grace has done for them," and to repeat again, my dear, in the quietness of this room, the adequate Christian life depends upon our understanding of what God has done for us and what we are as a result of it.

Now, that's the first thing you see. But, we have told each other over and over again that God not only does things for us, He does things in us as well, and the next step after this recital of what God has done for us is the introduction of the teaching of what God is doing in us and where the testing comes. It's a testing time and we ought to be aware of it; and God is refining the gold of our lives and getting rid of the dross because, dear, that leads us to the next step along

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<sup>1</sup> | Peter 1:1-4.

the line and that is that God has not only done something for us, He not only does something within us, but He does it in order that He may do something with us. God has got something in mind and we haven't seen adequately what that something is. Now we would expect that that is the revelation that lies just around the corner. We have been looking at something that is so wonderful, the gift of God's grace in making us the elect, sanctified, obedient, sprinkled ones with an inheritance incorruptible that it is so marvelous, and then the wisdom of God in refining us that He may give us adequate work to do and that we may do it correctly.

This whole thing is so wonderful that Peter reminds us that the prophets only dimly discerned it. There was a lot of things about this work of God's grace for undeserving sinners like us that even the prophets couldn't completely understand, and to make it even more wonderful, even the angels pondered or wondered and wanted to know more about it. Now if the prophets were amazed by it, and if the angels stand amazed in the presence, and the work that God in his grace has done for sinners like us, how important it is that we should understand something about it; and, my dear, when we say, "If the angels couldn't understand it, and if the prophets didn't understand it, how can we understand it?" Because, my dear, God has given us something that neither the angels nor the prophets had as we have it. He has given us the Spirit of God indwelling us. Now the prophets didn't know very much about that. The Holy Spirit came upon them for what they had to do; and the angels have never experienced what we have experienced, the redemptive work of God in His grace. They can only look at it from the outside but, the crowning thing of all that God has done for us is to give us the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit and that's the reason why a commonplace sinner like me can understand things about the redemptive work of grace that the prophet didn't understand completely and the angels are still wondering about it, and I know about it, you see? Now there's the secret of it.

Now we go along and we find that this is the emphasis. Our faith has been tested. The dross has been removed. We are now approaching something that we haven't seen before, an additional revelation is now coming to us and then we're going to read about it.

Let me remind you of this as we approach this door. Now we're approaching a door and we say, "If we're approaching a door, a door to what?" Now usually when we think of a door, we think of a door to a house and when we think of that, we are quite correct because this is a thing we haven't seen before. Now watch it. All the way around this chapter we have been hearing God's servant with God's Spirit behind him saying to us, "You have been brought into fellowship with God in such an intimate way that you are elect and sanctified and you've got an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled," but, there is one thing that hasn't been mentioned yet. There is something a family needs. If I'm a member of the family of God, the question is, where does the family of God live? Has God in His grace provided a house for us? Now we are elect according to the foreknowledge of God. We know how to behave ourselves. We have been given the central principle of obedience; we have been sprinkled with the blood as belonging to God our Father; we have been given an inheritance incorruptible at the end but what about now? Where do we live now? Where does a child of God live now? Between being brought into the family and the inheritance that is awaiting us at the end of the line. What about today? And my dear, as you would expect, there is the revelation, right at the end, and it is given to us in such a way that it explains the unexplainable thing to the prophets and the angels, but something that ought to be and must be crystal clear to us.

Now this is where we are, traveling along a path approaching a door and we're going to start and read together at Verse 18 and we'll read to the end of the chapter. Now you watch it because don't forget what we're looking at, we're looking at the door and don't forget, my dear, that a door hangs on two uprights. Look at any door you want to and you'll find it so. It's hanging on one, it's fastened to the other. Now that's a door. Now do we find the same thing here? Do we find the door that hangs on something and is fastened at the other side, do we? And if so, on what does it hang and to what is it fastened? Now let's see if we can follow that, alright, here it is, at Verse 18 read it aloud with me:

<sup>18</sup>Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

<sup>19</sup>But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

<sup>20</sup>Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

<sup>21</sup>Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

<sup>22</sup>Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.

Let's stop. Now did you notice what was on one upright of that door? It's redemption through the blood. Now that's where it hangs. We're going to enter a place. We're going to enter a home; a home prepared for us where the children of God live and we're going to enter it. And the door leading it hangs on that magnificent word – "redemption through the precious blood."

Now don't forget, that is the point that the prophets had difficulty in understanding. They could understand the glory but they didn't understand the suffering of the Messiah and they said so. We can't see why a Messiah should have to suffer and die and why his blood should be shed. Now that's an amazing thing because there was a time when the children of Israel went through a door out of bondage in Egypt into the traveling toward the promise land - what kind of a door was it that they went through? What was sprinkled on the door post and the lintels of that door when they went through? It is amazing how little understanding some of the children of Israel had of this tremendous thing, a door where the upright on which it hangs has been sprinkled with sacrificial blood. Now that's where we go through. Now, let's turn to 23 and see where the handle is and how it's fastened. It hangs on one upright; it is fastened to the other. Now look, here is the place where it's fastened. Now notice, read it with me:

<sup>23</sup>Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

<sup>24</sup>For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

<sup>25</sup>But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

Now my dear, here's a door and you can see it hangs on one upright with the precious blood of redemption on it and it is fastened on the other side with the incorruptible seed of the word.

Have you noticed that in that chapter there are three incorruptible things mentioned? We've got two of them right here. We passed one of them a little while ago because there is incorruptible blood, the incorruptible word and an incorruptible inheritance – and you see the connection with these? The only reason why God can give an incorruptible inheritance to anybody is because in His grace we have passed through the door with incorruptible blood on one side and the incorruptible word on the other; and we passed through and then in the dim distance that may be nearer than we think, there is an incorruptible inheritance.

What does incorruptible mean? It means it has no mark of death upon it. Now sin entered into the world and death by sin, and death is the mark of the corruptible things that came because sin came. When sin came, corruption came, because sin brought death; but corruption is the destruction of that which has already died. I think I've said to you before or I say it quite frequently, the man who knows most about corruption in any area is the undertaker because all he's doing is making it respectable for a day or two until it can be put away in the quiet care of mother earth or somewhere else. That's all. The mark of death.

But my dear, this is the reason why the Lord Jesus had to be born of a virgin in a way that we were not, because if he'd been born in the same way that others have been born, there would have been in the bloodstream the taint of corruption; and in God's lamb to carry our sins there must be no corruption at all.

Now, when you turn to the word of God, you've got the same thing. You've got a word that is incorruptible - a seed that can bring forth a perfect life satisfactory to God, and it doesn't bring forth anything that's contaminated. When God gave you the new life, to abide living in your heart, it was his own life and there is no corruption there.

Now my dear, you see what we're talking about this morning? We're talking about the fundamentals of our faith. We are saved because of the shedding of incorruptible blood and the operation of the Spirit of God, the incorruptible seed of the word of God. That's the way the Holy Spirit brought you into newness of life, He planted the incorruptible seed of the word in our hearts and then brooded over it and it brought forth a new life - the life of God Himself; and it's a new life, not an improvement of the old, not at all; and the reason why the Holy Spirit could bring us to newness of life by the implanting of the incorruptible seed of the word is because the Lord Jesus, God's lamb, had died on that cross and had shed His incorruptible blood that was satisfactory to God.

Now that's the truth that we're talking about. And old Peter wants them to understand it. When you're a member of the family of God, my dear, you are something special. You sure are. And it's the understanding of how special we are that solves so many of our behavior problems. If we are what the word of God says we are, and what faith declares with a double hallelujah we surely are, if that's the case, how can I be cheap enough to allow the world with its corruptible things to

find any place or any inference into this life of mine? And it solves the problem - where the world belongs, where it must be kept and what God has done in grace for us.

Now my dear, I'm going to tell you something that I expect you thought I'd forgotten. I was thinking about you at 8:00 this morning and I saw something at 8:00 this morning in this thing that I hadn't seen before and I'll tell you what it is and it has something to do with that phrase, "we're something special." Now my dear, we're talking about going through a door into a house, a habitation where the children of God dwell with God, the Father. Notice the description of it at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of Ephesians. I am not asking you to turn to it but sometime turn to the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of Ephesians and this house that we're talking about now.<sup>2</sup> It is described in two ways: one in the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter of Galatians and one in the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of Ephesians, and it is described in two ways: one, the household of God and the other, the household of faith. Now that's the name of the house. It's got the dual things written over the door. "This is the household of faith." "This is the household of God," and this is the thing I noticed at 8:00 this morning, that in each case when those words occur, Peter uses it, Paul uses it, he says, "Especially to those who are of the household of God and especially to those who are of the household of faith." And I stopped right when it happened, I don't know if one of my neighbors could hear or not, but I stopped right in the middle of it to say, "Hallelujah." This child of God, ordinary and commonplace and very often no good as he is, is something in the site of God is very special, "Especially for those who are of the household of faith, especially to those who are of the household of God."

Now my dear, we can look at each other and commonplace as we may appear to each other to those ordinary old eyes of ours, we're not ordinary folks to God. In that house, he has built it with the foundation of it in the faith and put the glory of His own personality into it all the way through, and He invites folks to live there who are very special to Him, especially to those of the household of faith.

Now you see where this man has been leading us in this teaching pathway. He started way back telling us in words that are almost incomprehensible to us how special we are and he's been going around and telling us something that is equally incomprehensible - what God will do in the life through testing of the one who is so special. Now we come to the end and we pass through a door, blood sprinkled on the one side and with the incorruptible word of God on the other, and we pass through but as we do so we go into a house that is especially for those of the household of God, and especially for those who are in the household of faith; and my dear, I'm looking into the faces of folks right now who are very special in the sight of God. Do you hear it? Now that is a little shall I say drop of \_\_\_\_\_ that came into that room of mine at 8:00 this morning and I pass it on to you.

We are very special and the reason why Peter has underscored that is because there are two sides to this door. Now that shouldn't be information to us. We ought to know that. If we look at this door or this one, there are two sides, inside and outside, and there are two sides. When we go

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<sup>2</sup> Ephesians 2:19-22: "Ye are...fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God: and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

through the door into the household of faith, what do you find on the other side? Now, we've discovered something on the other side that sort of takes us down a peg and God does that so beautifully sometimes that we fail to notice what He's doing. When we begin the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of Peter and we say, "We are elect according to the foreknowledge of God through sanctification of the spirit unto obedience through sprinkling of the blood and I have an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled," and we say, "In our hearts we must be something." We are adults. We are this and that and the other. It is a sign of our maturity.

Now one of the things we should covet and at the same time be a little bit afraid of is this thought of being and becoming mature Christians. We ought to remember that whether we are Christians at the beginning or the ending of life's road, we are what we are by the grace of God. Now, it's a little bit of a shock to find that the first thing you find on the other side of the door is a baby. Have you noticed? You don't find a mature Christian. You don't find somebody who is doing \_\_\_\_\_ and all the rest of it, because one of the things that the Holy Spirit through Peter and Paul and every other writer is anxious for us to remember is, we came into the household of faith as babies, not as mature Christians; and it does us good to go back once in a while to our babyhood. Now remember, my dear, and we're going to read again in a moment or two and you can see where we're heading both for the remaining portion of this lesson and the next one, next week. We are heading into a household where the very first thing you see is a baby.

Now, let me ask you something. What are the two great necessities for a baby? What does a baby need immediately? Two things. Now you make your own notes on this. He needs protection and provision. Now can I say that again? You visualize any baby you want and the first thing that baby needs is protection from the one side and provision on the other. And the thing that you notice the moment you get through the door into Chapter 2 is these two things, protection from something and provision for something, and you find those things. Now that's what we would expect, wouldn't we? If you were telling the story and writing it, that's what you would say. If you were answering the question, what do you find in the household of faith, the household of God, when you go through the door, what do you find? Overstuffed furniture? What do you find? Wall to wall carpets? What do you find? You find a baby, and a baby needs protection on the one side and provision on the other; and the mystery of it is, or the majesty of it is that God has provided the protection for that baby and the provision for it.

Now my dear, with that in mind, let's turn please to the opening two verses of the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of 1<sup>st</sup> Peter. Now don't forget those two words, protection and provision. You've got to take care of this baby and you've got to see that the baby has a full milk bottle. Now you see what God has done here and how it puts responsibility on us? You see something that God provides for us but He says you use the tools. Now don't forget that God didn't drag us through that door with blood on one side and the word on the other. He didn't force us through; we went through on our own two feet. Now God has provided the protection that we need but we're the ones to put it up against the door and see that that door is closed and kept closed.

Now, let's read it and then if we have a couple minutes we'll talk about it a little bit and then we'll go on with this at this point next Sunday, alright? The 1<sup>st</sup> two verses please, 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter 1<sup>st</sup> Peter together:

<sup>1</sup>Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,

E:\Sidney Cox Library Project\Subject Folders\1 Peter. Two Series\1973. Eastlake Alliance Church. B'ham, Alabama\Eastlake Alliance 1973 1 Peter Part 6.docx

<sup>2</sup>As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.

Now there's the instruction on the other side of the door. Now we went through the door by virtue and value of two things: the blood and the word. Now that admitted us through the door. When we get through, we hear a sound, "wherefore," and whenever you see it, it's like somebody's got us by the shoulders and shaking us into sensibility and saying, "I want to say something to you that is of utmost importance, the same thing that brought you through the door must be placed against the door to prevent intruders from coming in on the other side." Now, we are to put against that door the value of the blood and the word, and unless the blood and the word are on our side of the door keeping the enemy out, we are not safe at all. Now this old man is telling us that's the story.

Our Father, we give Thee thanks that in this quiet room there hast permitted us to talk about some of the things that look like and sound like the deep things of the Word of God. We pray that these may abide comfortably within our hearts, in Jesus precious name, Amen.